

**Statement by Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND)
on Wednesday's Debate on Renewing Budget Enforcement Tools
October 11, 2002**

Next Wednesday, the Senate will begin debate on whether to renew key Senate budget enforcement mechanisms that expired on September 30. It is crucial that those enforcement tools be reinstated. Without the budget enforcement mechanisms, the tax cut and spending doors will be left wide open.

We cannot afford to throw fiscal discipline out the window. These enforcement tools are even more important now, as we face the threat of war, growing deficits caused in part by the exploding cost of last year's tax cut, and the looming retirement of the baby boom generation.

The Senate resolution being considered was drafted on a bipartisan basis with Senator Domenici and includes:

- 1) a one-year extension of the provision requiring 60 votes in the Senate to waive certain budget 'points of order,' such as the point of order against any tax cut or spending legislation not provided for in the most recent budget resolution, and
- 2) a one-year extension of the Senate 'pay-as-you-go' rule, requiring 60 votes to pass any tax cut or mandatory spending legislation that would further tap into Social Security funds.

Make no mistake, the extension of these provisions does not represent everything that I would like to accomplish. I would prefer that they be statutory rules, instead of applying only in the Senate; that they be extended for five years, instead of just one; and that they include a discretionary spending cap of \$768 billion for 2003.

Senators Feingold, Domenici, and I offered such a bipartisan package back in June, which received 59 votes in the Senate, just one short of the number needed to pass. But unfortunately, the Bush administration, along with some Republican Senators, have blocked our efforts to extend a more comprehensive package of budget enforcement tools.

So this resolution is not everything that I want, or everything that needs to be done to ensure fiscal discipline. But it does represent a critical step in the right direction, and deserves the support of the Senate and the American people.

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